

Jordan's disabled to exhibit skills at Abilympics



By Suzanne Zu'mut-Black
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN, Oct. 11 — Five Jordanian contestants travelling to Tokyo on Tuesday will carry in their luggage the tools of their trades to test their manual and technical skills in the first international competition of its kind. They will also be taking the equipment which helps them through their daily lives: a pair of crutches, a hearing aid or a white stick. They are all taking part in the skill contest and the demonstration and exhibition at the 1981 International Abilympics for the Disabled to be held in Japanese capital between Oct. 19 and 23 on the occasion of the International Year of the Disabled.

The participants have been very carefully selected on his or her own merit by a subcommittee of



stration and exhibition of folk crafts and traditional handicrafts of the participating countries requiring special individual skills and distinctive national skills.

An exhibition of photographs from each country will show the handicapped in their employment environment. The photos for Jordan were done by the Ministry of Culture and Youth in conjunction with the Ministry of Social Development, and organised by

Mr. Rafiq Lahham, the deputy director of the Tourism Department.

Participants in the skill contests and the demonstration and exhibition must be at least 15 years of age and physically handicapped.

Alongside these activities, a seminar will be held having as its theme the employment of the disabled and will introduce the experiences of those who have become vocationally inde-

pendent. There will also be presentations on the development of vocational skills and employment opportunities in the participating countries.

Taking part in the seminar will be officials from these countries, the skill contest and demonstration participants and accompanying persons.

For its part, Jordan will be represented at the seminar by four experts in their field, led by Dr. Fakhri Hourani, a specialist on rehabilitation at the Directorate of Royal Medical Services. Joining him in the seminar is another member of the directorate, Mr. Joseph Karmi, who has been working on rehabilitation since he himself was paralysed. Another official is Mr. Khader Qubtan, a lawyer and expert on special education at the Ministry of Social Development, who is blind himself. Mr. Qubtan is greatly interested in the integration of the handicapped. The fourth seminar participant is Mrs. Joan Mary Majali, who, besides being a nurse, is an expert in the field with 25 years of work with the handicapped in Jordan behind her. She has also been involved in most of the practical arrangements towards this trip, including the selection of the participants, as well as ticket and route arrangements.

Going as attendants with the delegation are physiotherapist Saleh Oraibi, who works at the Hussein Society for Crippled Children, and Miss Amira Al Rimawi, a teacher at the Regional Centre for the Blind.

The host country provides for everything in Japan, but each country has to pay for its way there. The Jordanian delegation had no problem in finding financial and other backing at home. The National Committee sponsored the allowance and uniform expenses, while Alia, Cathay Pacific and the Regional Centre of the Blind contributed in different ways towards getting the delegation there and Mr. Ali Dajani of the Chamber of Industry saw to it that the group was fully insured. "Awards and citations for the skills will be distributed, but the main thing is the participation and exchange of ideas," as one official from the delegation told the Jordan Times.

1981 INTERNATIONAL ABILYMPIC FOR THE DISABLED, TOKYO

October 19 to 23, 1981.

Host Organization: Rehabilitation International The Japan Organizing Committee of International Skill Contests for the Disabled

INTERNATIONAL ABILYMPIC TOKYO



The number of countries indicating their intention to participate in the International Abilympic has reached 50, representing all major regions of the world. The distribution is as follows:

Asia and the Middle East: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Korea, Macao, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

The Pacific: Fiji, Guam, Papua New Guinea, Tonga.

Africa: Kenya, Nigeria, Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Europe: Denmark, East Germany, England, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Switzerland.

North and Central America: Canada, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama and the United States.

South America: Argentina, Brazil, Columbia and Peru.

the International Year's National Committee after comprehensive scanning of the different institutes all over Jordan.

Mr. Ibrahim Kurdi, a 42-year-old deaf-mute tailor, stands out for his great efforts in starting the Deaf and Dumb Club, the first of its kind in Jordan. The club has developed its own sign language and has formed its own football team.

"Mr. Kurdi has a lot of initiative and is conscious of the need to help the deaf-mute in the country, who are mostly illiterate," a selection committee member told the Jordan Times. Mr. Kurdi will naturally be entering the contest as a tailor.

Another contestant, Mr. Sami Azarah, 34, is entering the contest as a radio and television technician. He is paralysed and uses a wheelchair, but that does not stop him from being energetically involved in car engine repair in all its forms.

Miss Rasmieh Silma, 32-year-old Braille teacher, and Miss Ihtisam Amara, 22-year-old student, are both visually handicapped and belong to the Regional Centre for the Blind. They are both contesting with their knitting skills.

The fifth participant, Mr. Edward Habib, paralysed since childhood, will be demonstrating his skill at engraving silver and brass. (see box)

The skill contest is composed of 17 different occupational categories, including such skills as milling, watch repair, English typing, photo-typesetting, architectural drawing and cabinet making. The contestants will perform assigned tasks using their own tools as well as instruments and materials provided by the host country. They will be asked to finish the task within an allotted time, after which the quality of the finished products will be judged. Another event at the Abilympics

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EDWARD HABIB, 30, was chosen as a participant in the Tokyo 1981 Abilympics for the Disabled to demonstrate and exhibit his work as one of Jordan's most renowned craftsmen in engraving and calligraphy using brass, silver and gold.

Edward is taking with him finished artifacts of silver and brass, including designs in calligraphy, for exhibition and will demonstrate using some materials and tools, especially a saw. "The aim of the exhibition is to show somebody at work rather than just the end product," he said, showing the Jordan Times some of his wall plaques and jewelry.

According to Edward, his disability, polio, has worked to an advantage "since I had to work harder to prove myself."

During his 15 years in the business, including three years of training at the Vocational Training Centre in Alexandria, Edward had to work long hours "sometimes 12 to 14 hours a day" to be able to meet orders. "I don't have anybody to help me

for fear that the quality of the work might suffer," he explained.

Edward has come a long way since illness struck at the age of three. Between the ages of five and 11 he attended a special boarding school in the West Bank for paralysed children, the Ralph Beni Institute, which provided physiotherapy as well as education. "It taught me to be independent and disciplined," he said with apparent pride.

A further year of treatment in Lebanon included the fitting of leg supports. With these and the aid of crutches, Edward is completely mobile and can get about in his specially-modified automatic Opel Ascona. "I've had the car since 1979 and it has made a lot of difference to my life, for both business and pleasure," he said.

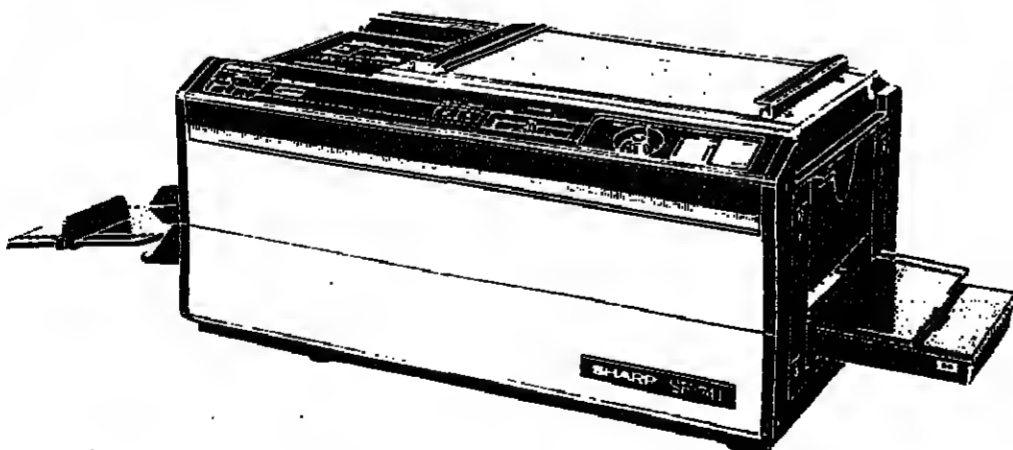
He has, however, a request to make of the Traffic Department. He suggests that disabled drivers be given special parking licences like doctors. He also feels that the government should facilitate public transport for all disabled people, with or without cars.

For the time being, Edward is happy with his trip to Tokyo since it will force him to have a much needed break and will give him the chance to travel.

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Historical gems with Russia's new discoveries

Since the olden days, Russia was famous for its carpenters who were indeed making wonders from wood. All over the immense country, from the White Sea to the Pacific Ocean, they built huts and mansions, churches and windmills.

Each area has its own architectural peculiarities. Now that the interest for the deeds and way of life of the Russian ancestors is growing, museums of wooden architecture are appearing one after another, including those in the Moscow Region.

A museum of Russian wooden architecture is set up near Istra, Moscow Region. Old living houses, mills, barns and other structures are delivered there.

Soon the museum will be looking like a 16th-17th century village.

Experienced carpenters have reconstructed a number of old structures: a 300-year old church, a typical peasant hut, a windmill and a chapel. In Istra, amid meadows and copses, under the light-blue sky they look like a natural part of the landscape. The museum is situated near the walls of the former New Jerusalem monastery, now also a 17th-19th century museum.

The aim of restorers, ethnographers, historians and art specialists is to preserve for centuries the creation of folk craftsmen.

Fotokhronika Tass



The museum in Istra: A 300-year-old church

This year the Russians celebrate the 300th anniversary of the birth of commander Vitus Jonassen Bering (1681-1741) a Danish sailor in the Russian service who led a number of Russian sea expeditions in the Northern Pacific.

On this occasion an archaeological expedition was formed and sent to the Komandorskiye Islands. They found new objects relevant to the two Kamchatka expeditions led by Cdr. Bering in 1725-1730 and in 1773-1741.

The archaeologists found seven cannons on the Bering Island, remains of dugouts built by Russian sailors under Bering, and thousands of small objects that have helped to plot the obscure chunks of the commander's route in that part of the Pacific.

The Commander of the Bering Island Bight was the last haven of the Second Kamchatkan Expedition called at. The St. Peter which carried the expedition party back from America's coast, had to drop her anchor at that night in the then uninhabited island, for many of the crew were down with scurvy.

Nine months passed before the survivors could sail on aboard a new boat built out of remnants of the St. Peter, and reach Kamchatka. They had to leave some of their equipment including guns, powder and balls.

Cdr. Bering died in the island and was buried there. Excavations in the Bering Islands were done by specialists of the Far Eastern History, Archaeology and Ethnography Institute of the Far Eastern Branch of the Academy of Science of the USSR in the city of Vladivostok.

The recovered guns are in an excellent state. The archaeologists scrubbed off a thin rust crust and found the producer's mark: "Kamensky Mill, 1733". Historians had known from documents that Cdr. Bering's cannons were cast at that mill in the Urals just in 1733. The guns were given restoration treatment right on the spot. "The seven guns found in the Bering Island this season are to join the collection of things we found earlier on the site of the Russian winter camp of 1741-1742. We dug out the caves where

sailors had lived and found some ship rigging, carpenter's tools, coins, a metal water tank, fragments of China ware and numerous bones of sea creatures eaten by the marooned sailors", says Vitaly Linkov, the chief of the archaeological expedition which has sailed aboard the yacht Chukotka along the routes plotted by Cdr. Bering and fixed in his log books the archaeologists found in Vladivostok's archives. According to the logs, Cdr. Bering cleared the straight twice between Asia and America in 1729. Now the straight bears his name. The archaeologists also confirmed Cdr. Bering's discovery priority right on 87 geographical objects which he discovered during the First Kamchatkan Expedition.

The memory of early Russian discoveries is alive. Five memorial plaques with 31 names of the crew members who died aboard the St. Peter and in that winter in the Bering Island, have been placed near the grave of their Commander.

Fotokhronika TASS



The monument to Cdr. Bering in the village of Nikolskoye.

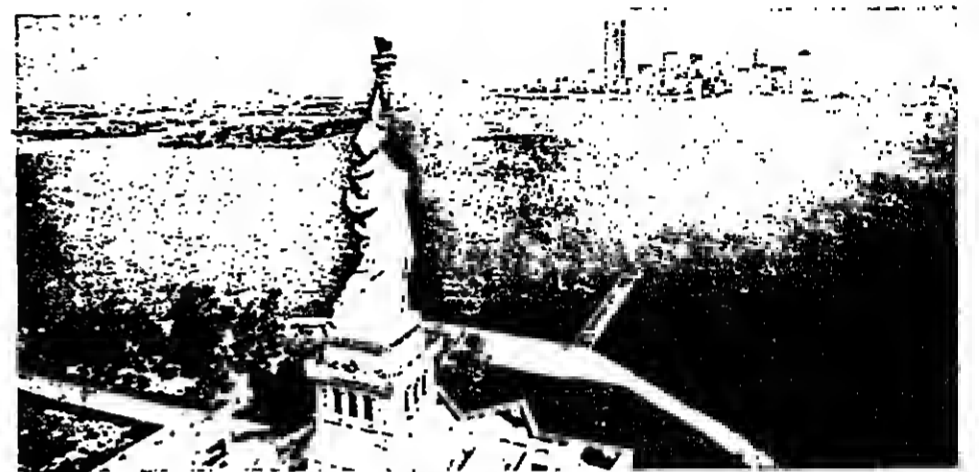
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